

The Medical Waste Reporter



Announcements for Wisconsin's Medical Waste Generators

Reporting year 2001

Issued January 2002

New Awards Program for Reducing Health Care Waste

Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) has created an awards program for healthcare facilities, that are reducing wastes.

The awards are:

- The **"Partner Award"** for facilities setting goals to reduce waste.
- The **"Partner for Change Award"** for facilities reducing all of their waste streams.
- The **"Mercury-Free Medicine Award"** for facilities virtually eliminating mercury.
- The **"Environmental Leadership Award"** for facilities setting the standard for waste reduction of all materials (mercury, medical, hazardous and solid wastes).
- The **"Program Champion Award"** for trade associations, state agencies, manufacturers of medical equipment, suppliers, etc., that promote H2E goals to members of their organization, or within their organization.

If your medical facility has a medical waste reduction plan, it easily qualifies for one or more of these awards. Although H2E has begun by focusing on hospitals, clinics and nursing homes can earn the awards too.

For more information about the awards, visit www.h2e-online.org and review the brochure sent

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with your 2001 infectious waste annual report.

H2E is a collaborative effort of the American Hospital Association, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Health Care Without Harm, the American Nurses Association, and many individuals and organizations.

Wheelchair Recycling Program Can Help You Reduce Waste

Do you have unused or broken wheelchairs, other medical equipment or medical supplies taking up valuable storage space?

The Wheelchair Recycling Program (WRP), a non-profit organization, would accept your donations and give them to people who cannot obtain them through their own resources.

*Providing
"mobility
with dignity"
to those
in need*

The WRP fixes and cleans equipment and distributes it mainly to persons in Wisconsin and the United States. Medical supplies are usually shipped overseas to international aid organizations.

Over 250 tons of equipment and supplies have been diverted from landfills since 1995, including mobility equipment, bath equipment, beds/lifts, gurneys, respiratory equipment, gloves and other non-durable medical supplies and office supplies.

To donate equipment or supplies, to support the program financially or just to find out more, call (608) 243-1785 or visit www.wrp.org

What Waste Type is an EPI Syringe?

Epinephrine *residue* in a syringe is not a P042 listed hazardous waste and its syringe is considered to be infectious waste. However, a *full* EPI syringe is legally considered to be hazardous waste, not infectious waste.

Mercury →Reduction← News

Dental Mercury Recycling

The Wisconsin Dental Association, in partnership with the UW-Extension and the DNR, mailed a "Recycling Amalgam Waste" best management practices guide to all WDA members in 2001.

There will be a panel discussion on "Waste Reduction and Recycling in Dental Offices" at the WDA statewide meeting in May 2002.

To request a copy of the guide or for more information about the meeting, please contact Randy Case (see box below).

Do a Mercury Baseline Survey

A mercury baseline survey is available on the H2E website, www.h2e-online.org, to help you track your progress in reducing mercury.

If you complete the survey or submit a mercury baseline report to H2E for its recognition program, please send a copy to DNR too. We would like to know how you are reducing mercury. You may submit the survey either with your infectious waste annual report or separately. Or, you may simply report on mercury reduction under line P of your annual report.

HOW TO CONTACT DNR STAFF:

Medical waste questions:

Barb Derflinger, Medical Waste Coordinator
Phone: (608) 267-3548 Fax: (608) 267-2768
Email: medwaste@dnr.state.wi.us
Address: DNR WA/3, PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Mercury questions:

Randy Case, Health Care Sector Specialist
Phone: (608) 267-7639 Fax: (608) 267-0496
Email: casec@dnr.state.wi.us
Address: DNR CO/8, PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

DNR Web site: www.dnr.state.wi.us

Medical Mercury Workshops

The Midwest Recycling Association and the LaCrosse County Health Department co-hosted a "Reducing Mercury in Healthcare" workshop on September 19, 2001, in Black River Falls. A similar workshop was held in May in Green Bay.

The LaCrosse workshop featured practical mercury reduction advice for both medical and dental facilities, including a case study by Gunderson Lutheran Hospital of LaCrosse. This is the fifth mercury reduction workshop conducted in Wisconsin since 1999.

The next workshop will highlight the mercury reduction award program described on page 1. For more information, contact Randy Case (see below).

The next Hg workshop will be held in the summer of 2002 in central WI

How much Hg was collected???

- The free "Wisconsin Mercury Recycling Program" collected over 2,500 lb. of mercury from hospitals, dentists, schools and the general public during 1999-2001. Final statistics will be available in a few months.
- Eighteen Walgreens stores collected 2,800 mercury fever thermometers from the public over a three-month period in 2001 in Dane County, and sent them to the county clean sweep facility for safe disposal and recycling.
- The Marshfield Clinic has removed over 400 mercury manometers and over 100 mercury thermometers from its main clinic. That amounts to approximately 100 lb. of mercury.

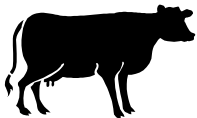
"Aneroid Devices Were Accurate"

So concluded The University of Michigan in a paper in Blood Pressure Monitoring, a journal for research on blood pressure measurement. Find it at www.bpmonitoring.com (S. Yarows and K Qian, 19 Mar 2001).

Animal Sharps Disposal

The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA), the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) and DNR have teamed up to prevent improper disposal of sharps used on animals.

"We encourage all veterinarians to educate their clients about safe sharps disposal," remarks Leslie Grendahl of WVMA. "We also encourage them to accept sharps from their clients."



MJ Wylie of UWEX agrees. "Many livestock producers and pet owners are unaware that their sharps can injure waste

haulers and cause long-term emotional stress and that laws about sharps disposal apply to them."

UWEX created a display about animal sharps for the WI State Fair in August. To reserve the display for meetings, conferences and fairs, call 608-263-4300. Posters are also available.



To obtain brochures about animal sharps disposal, contact Barb Derflinger (see box on p. 2).

Is It Infectious Waste or Not?

It's a challenge to keep items that are not infectious out of biohazard containers. Here are a few items that are just plain old solid waste:

- **Isolation waste.** Wastes from patients with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), influenza and vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE), are NOT infectious waste unless they are saturated and dripping with blood or the body fluids listed in s. NR 500.03(22), Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Diapers, incontinence pads and menstrual pads.** These items are only infectious if saturated and dripping with blood.
- **Needle-less syringes.** If there is no needle, it's not a sharp. However, if a device has a needle, even if retracted or sheathed, it must be put into a sharps container.

If you don't know whether an item is infectious or not, call Jeannie Druckenmiller, DHFS Division of Public Health, at 608-266-2664 or send e-mail to druckjk@dhfs.state.wi.us

Hospital Slashes Water Use

A Minnesota hospital recently cut its water usage approximately in half. Here's how.



First, maintenance staff gathered data on water usage and asked all department heads to help save water. Next they set goals for water reduction in the 7 areas of major water usage (listed below). Some of the ideas they implemented were:

Dietary: All waste food is diverted to a pig farm instead of being run down the garbage disposal. All disposals and faucets have water reducers.

X-ray: A new dry developer eliminates drain problems and saves water.

Surgery: Water-saver kits were installed on all sterilizers during regular preventive maintenance.

HVAC: A small water chiller serving the radiation and MRI units saves lot of water and energy, and provides free heat in the winter.

Pathology: An air distiller for xylene recycling reduces xylene recycling waste from 75 gallons to 7, with no water usage.

Medical equipment: Vacuum pumps which use water as a sealer were replaced with vacuum pumps that use no water and use less energy to operate. New medical air compressors require no water for operation. Old compressors serve as back-ups.

Patient rooms: Sink and shower faucets have water reducers and restrictors with Teflon washers.

By cutting water use, the hospital also reduced hot water load, water softener load, salt usage, boiler load, boiler fuel, boiler chemicals, maintenance of boilers and plumbing, hazardous waste disposal costs and energy use. **WOW.**

Want to follow this example? See page 4 for resources about reducing water and energy usage.

Source: Minnesota Healthcare Industry Environmental Management Advisory Group meeting minutes for April 19, 2001, regarding Fairview Southdale Hospital in Edina, Minnesota.

NEW RESOURCES

Cutting Water and Energy Use

www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/essentials.cfm describes ways small businesses can improve environmental performance in energy efficiency, water use, cleaning, construction, remodeling, purchasing, etc. Includes links to other sites.

www.energystar.gov has a performance rating tool for hospitals to analyze their buildings' energy performance, set goals for progress and track progress. Or call 1-888-STAR-YES.

es.epa.gov/oeca/ofa/pollprev/wateru.html is a checklist of actions for reducing water use.

Health Care Pollution Prevention

Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) is for clinics and nursing homes, too. Visit www.h2e-online.org for resources, tools and programs for reducing health care waste, such as an e-mail discussion group and the awards program described on page 1.

Going Green: A Resource Kit for Pollution Prevention in Health Care Health Care Without Harm has assembled this kit for health care providers/administrators to reduce pollution from their facilities in steps that range from the simple to the complex. Find it at www.noharm.org

A Health Care Environmental Purchasing Tool can help you to screen products for persistent bioaccumulative toxins like mercury and to work with your group purchasing organization to reduce the environmental consequences of purchases. Go to www.ahrm.org, Click on "Products and Publications" in the drop-down menu, then click on "Purchasing Tool". For bound copies, call Fran Kurk at 651-215-0242.

To reduce PVC use, obtain the free video "First Do No Harm", which explores the relationship between PVC use and dioxin formation and what you can do about it. Contact Health Care Without Harm at 202-234-0091 or visit www.noharm.org

WasteCap Wisconsin assists businesses with waste reduction and recycling. Their web site, www.wastecapwi.org, includes publications and

links about diverse topics such as kitchen waste reduction, construction and demolition recycling, environmental purchasing and more.

Reducing Mercury Use in Health Care/ Promoting a Healthier Environment: A How-to Manual by the Monroe County (New York) Department of Health, 1999. On-line: www.epa.gov/glnpo/bnsdocs/merchealth/

Recycling Markets

You can now search the **Wisconsin Recycling Markets Directory** for businesses that buy or accept recyclable materials. Go to www.dnr.state.wi.us, pick "go to some top topics," choose "Wisconsin Recycling Markets Directory" and begin your search. Paper copies of the directory are no longer available.

Disposing of Used Computers

"Managing Used Computers, a Guide for Businesses and Institutions" If you landfill or incinerate used computers, you may be subject to full hazardous waste regulation. To find other legal disposal options, review this publication at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/wm/publications/recycle/pubwa420.pdf

Laboratories

Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories can visit www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/ for publications and links on biosafety, lab design and links to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs).

Pollution Prevention and Waste Minimization in Laboratories, ed. by Reinhardt, Leonard and Ashbrook, 1996, Lewis/CRC Press.

Biomedical Laboratory Code of Practice; Best Management Practices for Pollution Prevention. Pub. by City of Albuquerque Public Works Department. Contact Brynda Gutierrez Lujan at 505-873-7058 or blujan@cabq.go

These announcements were prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, for distribution with publication PUBL-WA-809-01 (infectious waste annual report form packet) in January 2002. Comments and questions can be directed to Barb Derflinger, DNR Medical Waste Coordinator (see contact box on page 2).